

Exhibit 17

**IDOT / FHWA Coordination
regarding
Dan Ryan Taskforce
Proposed Design Alternate**



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Highways/District 1
201 West Center Court/Schaumburg, Illinois 60196-1096

Dan Ryan Expressway
31st Street to Interstate 57
Cook County

March 18, 2004

Mr. Norm Stoner
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Illinois Division
3250 Executive Park Drive
Springfield, IL 62703

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Dear Mr. Stoner:

We are in receipt of your letter of March 16, 2004, outlining the necessary steps the Department must take to document the modified design we have proposed for this project subsequent to FHWA design approval which was granted on August 21, 2003. We are most appreciative of your guidance on this matter, and the willingness of you and your staff to work with us in our efforts to keep this major transportation improvement project on schedule.

We understand the steps that were outlined in your letter, and to that end, our staff is already developing a critical path schedule to be coordinated with FHWA early next week. However, we do request clarification on the implications of an alternative proposed by the Dan Ryan Task Force (DRTF). The DRTF has proposed to add back in the northbound and southbound exits to 51st Street. Aside from right-of-way and displacement issues, and the issue of requisite FHWA approval of exit ramps without reciprocal entrance ramps, we could not accomplish this without project delay. Adding these ramps back in would at least require modifications to the contract slated for the June 11th letting, which is not possible at this point. Our schedule is very tight such that even a month delay in this letting likely results in a year delay on the project. On this basis, the only possibility would be for the Department to pursue the necessary right-of-way acquisition and coordination with FHWA on a parallel or separate track to add 51st Street ramps back in at some point in the future. This would require reconstructing again, retaining walls and frontage roads that will be reconstructed with the contract to be let in June.

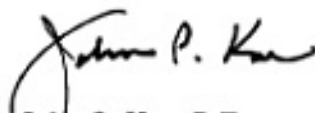
Notwithstanding all of this, we would like to know FHWA's opinion, based on this limited information, on the implications of IDOT pursuing this alternative as it relates to the steps in your March 16th letter. Is this likely to require that a higher level of environmental report be prepared, such as an Environmental

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Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement? If yes, what would be the likely implications of this from the perspective of maintaining the current project schedule, and typical timeframes associated with preparing and coordinating a higher level of environment document?

Thank you again for your guidance in this matter, and your continued support as the Department pursues this major Interstate reconstruction project. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me or Michael J. Matkovic, Bureau Chief of Programming, at (847) 705-4393.

Very truly yours,



John P. Kos, P.E.
District Engineer



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

Illinois Division

3250 Executive Park Drive
Springfield, Illinois 62703

March 31, 2004

HDA-IL

Mr. Jon P. Kos, District Engineer
District One
Illinois Department of Transportation
201 West Center Court
Schaumburg, IL 60196

Dear Mr. Kos:

This letter is in response to your March 18, 2004 letter requesting clarification on the implications of modifying the approved project design to add back in the northbound and southbound exit ramps at 51st Street on the Dan Ryan Expressway reconstruction project as proposed by the Dan Ryan Task Force. It is our understanding that the addition of these ramps would require the acquisition of additional right-of-way and business relocations, beyond the 0.691 acres being acquired for the approved design. We further understand that to return the exit ramps at 51st Street without substantial right-of-way impacts would intolerably compromise the project's purpose and need to improve safety and traffic operations.

The impact of adding the 51st Street ramps back would require approximately six to twenty-four months to acquire the additional right-of-way for those ramps. Further, depending on the extent and the nature of the properties needed, it is possible that an Environmental Impact Statement would be needed to fully address the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The IDOT must obtain authorization from the FHWA before proceeding with any real property acquisitions, including hardship acquisition and protective buying (23 CFR 710.307). Essentially, all right-of-way acquisition must be clear before a project can be awarded.

If you need further clarification on this issue, please contact Engineering Team Leader Pamela Heimsness at 217-492-4626.

Sincerely,
/s/ Norman R. Stoner
Norman R. Stoner, P.E.
Division Administrator

cc: Mr. Timothy W. Martin, Secretary, IDOT
Mr. Victor A. Modeer, Director, IDOT
ecc: Schneider, Heimsness, Byars
NRS:kj
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